

Subject: Chat with Ravi Somaiya

From: Ravi Somaiya <ravi.somaiya@gmail.com>

To: barriticus@gmail.com

Ravi: Hey Barrett, hope you're well.

me: indeed

Ravi: Just wondering if this Mexico thing today is bullshit. Have you heard anything?

me: it's not at all bullshit

Ravi: I mean the rumour that a woman has been released by the Zetas.

me: I don't know about it being a woman, necessarily, but the release did apparently occur, but not in response to the op; the person was not known by the Zetas to be the Anon

me: This person can tell you more

me: anonymous.itzela@gmail.com

me: I'm not sure what other details I can give out at this point

Ravi: Who is that person?

Ravi: The email address, I mean

me: a Mexican Anon whom I've been working with on this

me: in the short term, I'm likely going to be releasing the name of a DA who has been reliably reported to work with a certain U.S.-operating organization with some ties to Zeta

Ravi: Can you tell me, off the record, any details about the person who was taken? I'm not going to publish even the hint of a detail, as I don't want to endanger a life. But it would help in researching.

me: and perhaps more as other informants come to me as a result of the media coverage

me: I cannot, you'll have to ask this Mexican Anon

Ravi: What evidence have you seen that the kidnap really happened?

me: None, nor would I have expected to as we have no intention of providing a chance that the person could be identified

me: however, this other person might be able to tell you more.

Ravi: But if the person couldn't be identified, how could the Zetas respond to the threat?

me: These Anons assumed that the Zetas knew who it was

me: But obviously they had no way of knowing the exact situation

Ravi: So, just to clarify: an Anon was taken by the Zetas. The video was released, then the Anon was released, but because the Anon was never identified it is not clear if it is linked to the op.

me: That's basically it, yes. But you really should check with Itzela

me: her English is good

Ravi: I definitely will, thanks for the email address.

me: no problem

Ravi: I'm going to ask a stupid question.

Ravi: If no one has any evidence a person was kidnapped, how do you know a person was kidnapped?

me: I'm relying on the account of someone I've known and worked with in the past and whom I believe to be telling the truth based on the nature of her responses as well as other details I can't go into due to the present situation

me: Obviously if I were functioning as a journalist, that wouldn't be sufficient. But in this case...

me: We already have journalists looking too fucking closely into who the person is, including a review of Mexican records, and as such we're very reluctant to assist them in finding out more.

Ravi: But a responsible journalist won't run the name.

Ravi: So what difference does it make?

me: If you take a few minutes to think about the process by which such a name would come up and the nature of the situation in Mexico, and concede that mistakes occur in journalism, you can probably guess.

Ravi: True.

me: Again, this would be of greater concern to me if the U.S. media bothered to pay attention to those larger issues on which I have already produced evidence.

me: As it is, we don't really need the trust of the media inasmuch as that most of our operations are fait accompli when reported

me: So, we are confronted with the decision between risking someone's life and proving that a person exists to reporters with whom we already have an ambivalent relationship

Ravi: I can see your argument.

Ravi: But if you take me, for example, I don't think I've ever done anything that might make you think I'm not trustworthy with sensitive information.

me: At any rate, even I have few details on this, so even if I wanted to - and of course I'd be happy to have this confirmed rather than have my outlets deem me untrustworthy - there's nothing I could do.

me: No, you're the exact opposite.

me: The Times can be trusted to withhold even information that is of public concern.

Ravi: Ha -- I can understand your frustration, but the NYT's news sense and yours will not always align.

me: That's true.

Ravi: But sometimes it will, obviously.

me: But again, I have few details to provide anyway, so I don't want to waste your time on that particular issue.

Ravi: Fair enough. Any details whatsoever -- however minor -- would be appreciated if you are so minded.

me: Nothing more I can say about the kidnapping victim. I suggest you talk to Itzela about it.

Ravi: Will do. Congrats on the book, by the way.

me: Thanks, I'm excited for the opportunity

Ravi: I'm sure you'll do a good job.

Ravi: Write it like a movie!

2 of 3 **me:** well, we've already had several offers on option

me: And in this case I don't think I can help but write it like a movie, I suppose

Ravi: You'd be surprised how many people can fail to write drama in dramatic circumstances. But I'm sure you're not one of them. You have a sense of what's fun and cool, which is vital.

me: Yeah, I'm hip alright

Ravi: Ha -- by cool I don't mean Williamsburg. I mean interesting.

me: either way